

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE RISE AND FALL OF THE RENAISSANCE PARTY:
IMPLICATIONS OF DE-BA'ATHIFICATION ON IRAQI SOCIETY**

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ABSTRACT

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The Ba'athist movement took root in the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, inspired by the Pan-Arab, anti-colonial vision of Syrian intellectuals. It gradually seeped into the political chaos that engulfed the new nation of Iraq and found favor with the secular views of a small group of military officers and bureaucrats. These Ba'athist seized power in a 1968 coup and, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, began a rule of terror that encompassed nearly 35 years.

The clash of American and Iraqi national interests resulted in a prolonged conflict that would ultimately be decided by a series of wars. The Bush administration's decision to pursue a policy of regime change led to discussions on how to conduct the post-war occupation and reconstruction efforts. Some believed that military success would provide the opportunity to export democratic ideals to the troubled Middle East. Inherent in this change was a policy that would purge Iraqi society of the scourge of Saddam through the process of de-Ba'athification. This paper examines the effectiveness of de-Ba'athification measures and how they influence efforts to establish a stable and democratic Iraq.

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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE RENAISSANCE PARTY: IMPLICATIONS OF DE-BA'ATHIFICATION ON IRAQI SOCIETY

We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

— President George W. Bush

Unfortunately, the current indiscriminate policy of “de-Ba’athification” does not contribute to economic reconstruction, political stability, or the cause of justice and national reconciliation.

— Ayad Allawi

Who will reconcile with whom? Will those buried in mass graves reconcile with those who killed them?

— Ahmed Chalabi

The Ba’athist movement took root in the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, inspired by the Pan-Arab, anti-colonial vision of Syrian intellectuals. It gradually seeped into the political chaos that engulfed the new nation of Iraq and found favor with the secular views of a small group of military officers and bureaucrats. These Ba’athist seized power in a 1968 coup and, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, began a rule of terror that encompassed nearly 35 years.

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RISE OF THE BA’ATH PARTY

Ba’athist ideology grew in the turmoil of the post-World War I dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire. Damascus, hub of anti-colonial agitation, was fertile ground for the revolutionaries who sought social change, Arab unity, and freedom from western beliefs. Michel Aflaq, a Syrian-Christian, and Salah Al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni-Arab, were the ideological founders of the Ba’athist movement. While attending the Sorbonne in 1920’s Paris, they were influenced

by prevailing radical movements and came to admire the organization of the French communist movement.

In 1940 they christened their emerging political movement the Renaissance (Ba'ath) Party and promoted its doctrine of socialism, Pan-Arabism, and anti-colonial attitudes. Pan-Arabism is a philosophy that keeps Islam pure through rejection of western influence and ideals. Ba'athism espouses the unification of all Arab lands, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, in order to defeat colonialism. Furthermore, its secular approach encourages the separation of religion from the affairs of the state. This was a clear attempt to overcome the archaic, unproductive and overly emotional elements of Islam that hindered progress. So began their quest, in the words of author Amatzia Baram, to raise "the Arabs from the ashes and fulfill a worldwide eternal mission of civilization and enlightenment".¹

In 1952 the Iraqi Ba'ath Party was founded as a branch of the Syrian movement. Following the cell structure of the early communist organizations it was highly organized, clandestine, and ruthless. In 1959 the Iraqi Ba'athist burst from obscurity with a bold assassination attempt on Abd al-Karim Qasim, the Iraqi dictator. Though wounded Qasim survived to crush the rebellion. Among the plotters was Saddam Hussein, a 22-year old Sunni Muslim, who escaped to Syria with a bullet in his thigh.

The attack coincided with a change in Iraq's international posture including Qasim's denouncement of the Baghdad Pact, an anti-Soviet alliance, and the ending of diplomatic relations with France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He also encouraged the rise of the Iraqi Communist Party and established relations with the USSR which provided technology, weapons, education, and technicians. While he successfully cut Iraq's reliance on the West he merely exchanged it for a dependency relationship with the Soviets. Iraq's foray into Cold War politics caused strained relationships with regional neighbors such as Turkey, Iran, and Egypt. This had long term consequences regarding Kurdish unrest, border disputes, and the militarization of the region.

In 1963 the Ba'athist staged a military coup and murdered President Qasim. However, the new regime failed to consolidate power and was ousted after a 10-month reign. Party officials learned from this failure during five years of exile and imprisonment and on 17 July 1968 the Ba'athists returned to power via a second coup, this time determined to stay.

Under Hasan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein they tightened their grip on power through a campaign of arrests, executions, and assassinations. A move to institute state-sponsored fear in January 1969 resulted in the mass arrest of a number of "enemies of the state", primarily Jews and Iraqi Communists. The following show trials with their fabricated confessions resulted in

death sentences for conspirators of the alleged "Zionist espionage network." The citizenry was invited to view the public executions in Baghdad's main square where the bodies hung for 24 hours. This brutal act evoked a surprising strong display of public support which effectively fused the ruling regime to the Iraqi people.

These executions were the first in a series of bloody purges that removed opposition leaders and demonstrated the regime's brutal nature. Later purges "purified" the leadership of the Ba'ath party itself. As state-sponsored terror spread, Iraqi society became more closed, suspicious, and secretive. The widespread use of informers haunted every aspect of society, as special favors, jobs, and educational opportunities were increasingly tied to regime loyalty and support.

THE BA'ATHIST UNDER SADDAM HUSSEIN

Saddam Hussein was careful not to challenge the older Hasan al-Bakr for he needed the older politician's legitimacy as well as the influence the ex-general maintained throughout the regime-supporting military. Eventually Hussein consolidated his position and displaced the ailing president, emerging in June 1979 as the sole leader of the Iraqi Ba'athist.

Saddam immediately moved against his rivals, including over 500 high-ranking Ba'athists and supporters of al-Bakr. In one infamous act he staged the forced confessions of senior party officials accused of treason. These confessions, taped with the conspirator's family held hostage, were shown before the assembled political body. In true theatric fashion, President Hussein wept as additional conspirators were exposed and solemnly marched out of the assembly hall. For final effect Hussein ordered the execution of the prisoners by a firing squad made up of senior party leaders.² This murderous act cemented his bond to the remaining party leaders and effectively removed potential challengers.

Under Saddam Hussein the Ba'ath party consolidated its grip on every aspect of Iraqi society. He created a Stalinist-like state security system and ruled through fear, brutality, and intimidation. He tightened party control over the economy through state control of industry and centralized economic planning. Hussein also implemented reforms to replace senior military leaders with civilians he could trust. Over time Saddam turned to clans, tribes, and family ties as a means of adding further safeguards to the overall security of his regime. With these measures Hussein reduced opposition and tied all senior leaders of the party more closely to himself. The new Ba'ath ideology was no longer concerned with socialism, Arab unity or the struggle against imperialism; it was now focused around whatever Saddam wished it to be.

Under Saddam the Ba'ath Party was organized as a grassroots level political party that saturated every aspect of Iraqi life. The basic structure was formed from a neighborhood organization called the Khaliyaa (Party Cell) with 3-7 members. The Firqa (Party Division) consisted of several party cells and served as the primary means to organize the bureaucracy and the military. The Shu'ba (Section) was based on 2-5 party divisions controlling a county or large city quarter. The Far' (Party Branch) functioned at the provincial level and was usually composed of two sections. The Regional Command (Qutriyya) exercised national level leadership while the National Command was the link to international movements. Power was exercised through the Regional Leadership (RL) and the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), however, the "Supreme Leader" was the ultimate party voice. Saddam controlled a party organization that was completely submissive to him alone and by 1990 it included about 50,000 party leaders and two million supporters.

As he consolidated power, Saddam and his key assistants turned to the Soviet model for developing a security system that kept order through repression and terror. This system was a series of overlapping and compartmentalized agencies which efficiently gathered information on the Iraqi citizenry. Just as important, they monitored the activities of all other intelligence and security agencies. This system allowed Hussein to ply one state service against another and prevent any agency from developing too much power.

The Public Security Directorate (Amn al-Amm), was the government organization responsible for conducting criminal investigations and the General Intelligence Service (Mukhabarat al-Amma) monitored political activities. The Military Intelligence Service (Istikhbarat Askriyya) focused on foreign threats and loyalty of the officer corps while the Ba'ath Military Bureau provided security within the Military itself. Later Saddam created the Bureau of National Security (Maktab al-Amn al Qaumi) to oversee the activities of the Public Security Directorate, the General Intelligence Service, and Military Intelligence officers. Finally, a new organization, the Special Security Organization (Amn al-Khass), protected the regime and safeguarded the emerging Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program. The security apparatus eventually grew to over 200,000 and represented nearly 15% of all government employees³.

The Ba'athist generally distrusted the nation's military forces, for Iraq's history was rich with coups and political manipulation by senior officers. In reality, the Army persisted as the only true threat to the regime survival. By the mid-1970's Saddam directed the Ba'athization of the military, primarily through early recruitment of trusted, young officers. He also employed a "commissar system" to aid political indoctrination. A July 1978 decree completed the effort and

all non-Ba'athist activity was regarded as an act punishable by death. Purges remained a favorite tool to counter-balance the emerging power of potential contenders with executions often the price for suspected disloyalty or military failure.

Ba'athist influence extended far into the state bureaucracy. Indeed, party membership was essential for employment, higher salaries, political advancement, and acceptance in elite schools.⁴ Career progression within professional organizations and associations depended upon proper party credentials. Media instruments were targeted to exploit its tremendous influence over the masses and manipulate international opinion. Likewise, Ba'athists focused on teacher's unions and faculty groups in order to use the education system for party use. Faculty members were restricted to party members, thus forcing academics to choose between intellectual freedom and employment. As the Ba'athist gained power it required universities to conform curriculums to match party whims and conduct classes in Ba'athist ideology.

As his power increased, so too Saddam Hussein's manipulation of the Iraqi people. Through an ever-growing "cult of personality" Saddam's face was constantly present in publications, posters, the media, and throughout society. This national fascination with the "Great Leader" was eerily reminiscent of Mao, Hitler, or Stalin. He revived archeological study to appeal to the historical pride of the Iraqi people and to their region's role as the birthplace of civilization. He portrayed himself to a nation of Sunni and Shiites, Arabs and Kurds, secularists and Islamists, as the successor to Nebuchadnezzar of the Assyrian Empire. The majesty of Babylon was portrayed throughout the country in statues, paintings, and parades as the familiar likeness of the ancient Mesopotamian kings mixed with the familiar visage of Saddam Hussein. Saddam's focus on Iraqi folklore and heritage was his attempt to de-emphasize cultural and ethnic differences throughout society and to mold a distinctive, common Iraqi culture.

Saddam made significant strides in ridding Iraq of illiteracy, yet even this largely successful effort was subverted to educate the emerging generation on proper Ba'athist principles. The schools became indoctrination centers for future party loyalists. This formal education began with children as young as five who were encouraged to join the "Pioneers" organization while the Tal'ia (Vanguard) enlisted over 1 million youth ages 10-15 years. Those in the 15-20 year group enrolled in the Futuw'wa (Youth Organization) a force of 127,000. The political indoctrination continued in the schools under the direction of the Education Ministry, which further molded young students into the form demanded by the state. This focus on the nation's young served to fracture traditional family structure as children were encouraged to inform on their parents and criticize their failures. The result was the political mobilization of the young and the large-scale manipulation of succeeding generations. There was no room left for

those who favored family over party. Children who refused to join Saddam's youth paramilitary gangs were locked up in jails by the hundreds.⁵

The threat of terror and brutality permeated every aspect of Iraqi society with executions, disappearances, and torture. The nation was rife with the shadow of informants and citizens reporting on each other. In one gruesome phase Saddam instituted a policy of amputation and branding to punish disloyalty and advertise his suppression of dissent. Accused military deserters were branded on the forehead, while others had hands or feet amputated. Doctors who refused to conduct the punishment, or provided cosmetic surgery to ease the suffering, were themselves subjected to the knife.⁶ Other dissidents simply disappeared. Dissident Kanan Makiya described the common ritual of the return of detainees where

what one assumes to be the corpse is brought back weeks or maybe months later and delivered to the head of the family in a sealed box. A death certificate is produced for signature to the effect that the person has died of fire, swimming, or other such action. Someone is allowed to accompany police and box for a ceremony, but at no time is he or she allowed to see the corpse. The cost of the proceedings is demanded in advance and the whole thing is over within hours of the first knock on the door.⁷

This terror pervaded every facet of Iraqi life, enforced by a vicious security apparatus. Their goal was to keep the citizenry in a constant state of fear and thus compliant to the demands of the state. Ba'ath party intimidation was particularly hard felt by the Shiite population. When violent Shia demonstrations broke out in opposition to the "infidel Ba'ath regime" they were brutally suppressed. The result was hundreds of executions and the mass deportation of over 40,000 people to Iran.⁸

CRACKS IN THE MANTLE

The year 1979 marked a period of momentous change in Iraq. The rebellious Kurds plagued Saddam's control efforts and his brutal retaliation indicated the nature of his tyrannical regime. His use of chemical munitions against Iranian troops and villages, caused an international outcry that finally coalesced in opposing his rule. Additionally, in 1980 Saddam initiated a bitter war with Iran and the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Saddam believed he could swiftly defeat the revolution-torn nation and collect easy war spoils; primarily dominance in the Persian Gulf and seizure of territories.

However, his plans turned into political disaster with the devastating costs wrought by the eight-year conflict. This fiasco was primarily of Hussein's own making, including his crippling micromanagement of the once capable Iraqi military. While the Army successfully regained a degree of autonomy in conducting military operations, the force still represented a potential

threat to the regime. During this period Saddam expanded the Republican Guard from three to twenty-eight Brigades, no doubt to dissuade any military threats to his power base.⁹

The massive losses of Iraqi soldiers on Saddam's battlefields served to alienate the population. The Shia community paid a huge cost in the lives for her sons who formed the majority of Saddam's enlisted ranks. They rose to protect Iraq against the external threat posed by Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranians and were slaughtered in droves. Saddam attempted to encourage their loyalty with promises of future upward mobility, as several important positions within the Revolutionary Command Council, Regional Leadership, and state mid-level positions were diverted to Shiite leaders. Still, there was no doubt that the real source of power remained firmly in the grasp of the Sunni Arabs, primarily those with family ties to Saddam's Tikrit clan.

The August 1990 invasion of neighboring Kuwait was yet another desperate miscalculation by Hussein. Once again his dream of a quick military victory faded as his interests collided dangerously with those of the Saudis and the Americans. The defeat of his vaunted Army by the U.S. led coalition loosened internal control and provided conditions for dissent. His rule was further threatened by the violent Shia revolts across the south which he moved to brutally suppress. Victims included tens of thousands of those who simply disappeared. Their recently found graves sprinkle the country.

Allegations of non-compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding WMD led to western efforts to punish Iraq. The implementation of United Nations approved sanctions struck at the heart of the Iraqi nation and at the Ba'ath party control mechanism. The spring of 2003 saw the United States forming another anti-Saddam coalition, this time with the intention of invading Iraq itself and conducting regime change. According to political analyst Marina Ottaway, the Bush administration expressed confidence that "the United States had the capacity not only to replace Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime but to alter the character of the state and the very social fabric of Iraq."¹⁰

When war began, U.S. policy makers assumed that Iraq's government could be removed with minimal disruption to the country's ability to function, and that Americans would be welcomed with open arms. United States Central Command (CENTCOM) planners expected the existing security apparatus to continue to enforce the rule of law even after Saddam was defeated. They further assumed that elements of the Iraqi Army could be used to help maintain order. Vice President Chaney had his own set of optimistic post-combat assumptions, predicting that American soldiers would be greeted as liberators and, after the Ba'athist fled, a "large middle-class Mesopotamian bureaucracy would remain in place to run the country."¹¹ The rapid coalition advance in OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM resulted in the quick collapse of Iraqi

military forces. Yet, even as U.S forces occupied Baghdad and toppled Saddam's regime, the Iraqi people remained antagonistic or complacent, a nation of fence sitters waited to see which side would prevail.

The occupation and reconstruction of Iraq was initially led by LTG(Retired) Jay Garner and the Organization for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). One important task was the implementation of a de-Ba'athification policy that removed the upper tier of party leadership and those who had committed criminal acts. Furthermore, Mr. Garner intended to keep the Iraqi Army intact, but reduced in size and purged of its political leadership. Displaced soldiers were to be employed through a civil works project while a new army was vetted and recruited.¹² His more moderate approach to reconstruction seemed out of favor with the Bush administration, as some members ridiculed it as "Occupation Lite".¹³

On 12 May Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and his Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) unceremoniously replaced General Garner and ORHA after a mere three weeks in Baghdad. Ambassador Bremer, a former counter-terrorism expert in the U.S. State Department, set out to make an immediate impact within Iraq. Four days later he issued CPA Order Number #1, directing the de-Ba'athification of Iraqi society through elimination of the party's structures and removal of its leadership from "positions of authority and responsibility in Iraqi society."¹⁴ This pronouncement was followed by an order to dismantle the Iraqi armed forces.¹⁵ The total political and economic reconstruction of Post-war Iraq was underway.

THE DE-BA'ATHIFICATION POLICY

The National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States never mentions regime changes in Iraq as a tenet of national strategy. It does list "political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity" as goals based on our values and national interests.¹⁶ It also contains elements that support war with Iraq, particularly the concept of pre-emption to defeat global terrorism and prevent our enemies from threatening us. Further, the NSS espouses principles that champion aspirations for human dignity, promote open societies, and encourage the infrastructure of democracy.¹⁷ The political reconstruction of Iraqi society is consistent with these efforts to promote justice, rule of law, and limits on state absolute power.

Why de-Ba'athification? Historically the concept is linked to the Allies' controversial de-Nazification policy during the post World War II reconstruction of Germany implemented by General Lucius Clay. Indeed his experience provides common challenges in the effort to rid an occupied nation of the scourge of a brutal regime. Despite the apparent success, it is instructive

to note that General Clay considered de-Nazification his “biggest mistake” for its ambiguity in application and divisiveness in German society.¹⁸ Even today there is debate over whether the policy was truly a success or merely a hindrance to post-war recovery. In many ways Germany was effectively de-Nazified through the impact of five years of devastating war, six million deaths, and Hitler’s failure to provide security and prosperity. Still the success of America’s largest reconstruction effort certainly looms large as a model for our occupation effort in Iraq.

Through de-Ba’athification the U.S. is trying to accomplish several tasks essential to long term success. Ambassador Bremer’s first official act, issuance of CPA Order number #1, reflects the relative importance of the measure. His decree banned the party, directed the removal of its leaders from positions of power in society, and took steps to prevent a Ba’athist re-emergence. The order specifically banned the top four tiers of Ba’athist leadership from working in the public sector. A month later CPA Order #2 directed the “Dissolution of the Entities”¹⁹ which included all government ministries, the security apparatus, and all military forces. It dissolved other Ba’athist inspired organizations such as the National Assembly, The Youth Organization (al-Futuwwah), and the National Olympic committee. Bremer’s order further promised investigations of senior party members and rewards for information that leads to the capture of those guilty of criminal acts. Finally Bremer’s measures attacked the “Cult of Saddam” by prohibiting display of images of Saddam or Ba’athist symbols in government buildings and public places.

While extensive, these measures still fall short of the demands of many Iraqis for justice, particularly those who directly suffered under the excesses of the Ba’athist. On the other hand, policy opponents bemoan harsh measures that smack of collective punishment. Still others contend the policy is impractical for it denies talents and experiences of mid-level bureaucrats when the country needs them most. This is particularly true among educators, medical workers, security forces, and technicians.

The two decrees effectively dismantled the existing Iraqi bureaucracy and unleashed a disgruntled and unemployed force on society. In particular, the decision to disband the Iraqi army was a monumental miscue. Prior to the war senior American analysts opined that “to tear apart the Army in the war’s aftermath could lead to the destruction of one of the only forces for unity within the society.”²⁰ In fact, the chief analyst for the CIA’s Baghdad station expressed his concerns of the de-Ba’athification edict by telling Ambassador Bremer, “Well, that’s 30,000 to 50,000 pissed off Ba’athists you’re driving underground”. Upon hearing that the Army would be disbanded and not paid he added, “That’s another 350,000 Iraqis you’ve pissed off, and they’ve got guns.”²¹

During the conflict there was no mass surrender of the Iraqi military, only the spontaneous evaporation of the 400,00 strong force. One former Iraqi officer stated, "If we had wanted to fight, we could have fought, but we just put down our weapons and walked away, not from fear, but to let the Americans save us from an unjust regime".²² Failing to mobilize this manpower for positive use was a major policy mistake. In short order the U.S. could have re-assembled the Army and employed it to keep order or conduct public works projects. Bremer's 23 May decree banning the organization stripped away a key national institution that could have played an important role in stabilizing the country.

It was easy to legislate the Ba'ath Party's demise. However, it will be much more complicated to break the party's grip on the people through its legacy of suspicion, conspiracy, and brutality. The CPA de-Ba'athification Order banned party members in the fourth tier (Firqah) and above from future employment in the public sector.²³ Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify senior party officials, for in the war's aftermath many records were destroyed or altered to hide party activity and rank. The new Iraqi Minister of Finance retorted that, "You'd think the only active Ba'athist was Saddam Hussein and all the rest were low-ranking nobodies".²⁴

De-Ba'athification policies also impacted the economic vitality of the devastated nation. The whole-scale firing of hundreds of thousands of government workers had an enormous impact on security and economic recovery in a country with 50% unemployment. De facto economic de-Ba'athification tends to blacklist companies that did business with Saddam's regime, further stifling the few outlets for progress. In all, this hasty and ill conceived policy failed to realize the goals to which it aspired.

The demand for justice will also provide unanticipated friction. Personal retribution, particularly in this blood-oath society, is easily wrapped in the guise of justice. Deep cuts in Ba'athist ranks can be used by less scrupulous Iraqis to rid themselves of political rivals or serve as a source of intimidation. Without stability and proper security it will be considered "open season" on suspected Ba'athists as violence and unexplained murders continue. The most worrisome factor is the real threat of civil war as key segments of society face social and political disenfranchisement. The predominance of the Sunni-Arab minority within the party organization makes it appear that Sunnis are singled out for political reasons. The same is true of the Sunni middle class which dominated within the bureaucracy.

There is a risk of cutting too deeply into the party ranks just as some fear not cleansing society enough. But where to draw the line? Who determines what constitutes a punishable crime? With a party membership of 2 million citizens, a strict policy denies the nation the critical talents that previously allowed the country to function. The de-Ba'athification Order has crippled

health services, education, and security. Adherence to this strict interpretation risks continued instability, compounds the reconstruction effort, and hinders the ability of Iraqi leaders to establish a sound government.

But who will make the hard decisions on amnesty, tribunals, and policies of national reconciliation? The Iraqi Governing Council, the interim governing body, currently lacks legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Furthermore, the reconciliation committee is headed by Ahmed Chalabi, a Shiite and former exile, who follows his own hard-line agenda. Even the decision to conduct trials will be a polarizing factor. The CPA must decide how to handle the investigation of Ba'athist criminal activity and determine how to bring violators to justice.

A critical decision will be how to conduct the trial of Saddam Hussein and his senior henchmen. The United States government will be unlikely to release jurisdiction in his case, but at some level the Iraqis themselves must have responsibility for the investigation, prosecution, and sentencing of individuals who committed crimes against the Iraqi people. The decision to employ capital punishment for those convicted of the most vicious criminal acts is another point of potential friction. The fledgling Iraq government and legal system must mature before they can undertake such complicated tasks. It is particularly important that coalition states honor Iraqi sensitivities and the humiliation of westerners trying Iraqi citizens. Saddam Hussein's trial before an American military tribunal or International Court will raise challenges to national sovereignty, test the legitimacy of the process, and set the stage for the conduct of the Iraqi experiment in democratic rule.

In an effort to understand this current reconstruction mission many turn to historic examples of occupation for insight. Invariably the American experience in de-Nazification is viewed as a model for success. Yet, the differences between 1945 Europe and modern-day Iraq are substantial. Germany was devastated by the direct, intensive effects of a war conducted on her homeland for four continuous years. The country was left politically rudderless, economically ruined, and militarily prostrate by the conflagration. Despite the impact of ten years of economic sanctions this is not the case with the quickly defeated Iraq. Furthermore, the Iraqi nation is much more fragmented by ethnicity, language, culture, political leanings, and beliefs on the role of women, and the struggle for the role of secularism versus religion in the future of Iraq. In many ways the experience of nations like Nicaragua, East Timor, or South Africa may offer more relevant lessons. Each of these nations had to contend with the difficulty of reconciling a population brutalized by its government and torn by divisive policies that marginalized large elements of its own citizenry.

The rush to dismantle the Ba'ath Party crippled the nation's bureaucracy and stripped the country of many of its most educated, talented, and experienced members. The U.S. State Department argues that, "Some mid-and low-level party members can and should be rehabilitated, as they have the experience to keep the country running."²⁵ The U.S. should modify the current policy and hire back the experienced administrators, bureaucrats and technicians. As the occupying forces found in Germany, "You can't run railroads without taking in some party members."²⁶

Iraqis are impatient that not one former Ba'athist has yet been held accountable for the reign of terror. The Governing Council must rapidly emplace mechanisms, such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to seek justice and defer calls for sheer retribution. It must also vigorously pursue a legal process to investigate and openly punish those guilty of serious crimes. Those charged would be judged by a tribunal with the worst offenders subject to criminal proceedings and punishments. The key will be how the courts elect to treat the large number of common party members. A policy of public shame, perhaps even full scale amnesty, rather than harsh punishment could serve to benefit the country and speed re-integration. Failure to demonstrate moderation will strip large numbers of citizens of any hope of re-entering society and lead to continued violence. This effort should be a decidedly Iraqi responsibility, with representation from across the nation, as any coalition conducted trials would be viewed as interference and continued imperialism.²⁷

The prosecution of Saddam and his worst henchmen is a separate situation. Their crimes against humanity would best be addressed by an American war crimes tribunal or an international criminal court. This approach would relieve Iraq of responsibility for the divisive effort of prosecuting the dictator. The trials would further serve to expose the crimes, excesses, and brutality of the regime as the proceedings are made available to the public.

Only a safe, fair and secure environment can reverse the cycle of fear that saturates modern day Iraq. CPA Order 22 directed the creation of the New Iraqi Army in a sensible manner²⁸, but the process is much too slow to meet current needs. We should take steps to stand up the New Iraqi Army, with proper scrutiny of senior leaders, and employ them to provide security of facilities and borders. This would reduce the burden of coalition stability operations and put more responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the Iraqis themselves. It would also enforce order by employing a trained security force with an Iraqi face. This proposal does not substitute soldiers for Iraqi police forces, for the Army should not have a primary role of enforcing internal security. However, the current threat from dissidents and infiltrators is a nation-wide emergency that threatens stability. The Iraqi Army has been highly regarded as a

symbol of national unity, the historical guarantor of sovereignty, and a counter to Ba'athist power. Iraq needs a professional military for defense and to reinvigorate national pride. In truth, few senior members are without complicity in the years of repression, but the CPA must take the necessary steps to de-politicize the institution and put it back to work.

Over 60% of the population is currently under 18 years of age and have spent their entire life under Saddam, existing under a state of war, and enduring the crippling impact of sanctions. If the coalition can win over this segment of society such action will go a long way towards creating an environment for progress. The CPA should focus on the nation's youth as a source of strength for the future. This means an effort to modify the hate-filled textbooks, counter the virulent anti-western propaganda, and destroy the loyalty to Saddam. Additionally, they must have jobs and hope for the future of Iraq.

Finally, the coalition must complete the destruction of Saddam's Cult of personality. As he began the process for us years ago, with his brutal suppression of the Kurds and the Shiite communities, the CPA can finish the job by careful documentation of the Ba'ath Party and its record of cruelty and excesses. The findings must be publicized across the country, and throughout the region, and must drive home the message that Saddam Hussein was a vicious criminal period and that his primary victims were the Iraqi people themselves. In the process the CPA must contend with the fact that many core Ba'athist values are firmly imbedded in Iraq culture, such as nationalism, unity, social and economic justice, and pro-Palestinian/anti-Israeli sentiments. The CPA will not be able to extinguish these core beliefs but must deal practically with these perceptions and condemn the worst party extravagances. Dissident Kanan Makiya has diligently documented the brutal actions of the Ba'athists under Saddam Hussein and his aspiration is creation of a national museum that will highlight these abuses. Such a display could go a long way in de-legitimizing party activities and to further the process of reconciliation.

CONCLUSION.

The political reconstruction of Iraq had a shaky start, yet there has been progress on many fronts. The security of the nation is slowly moving forward and there are 160,000 armed Iraqis attempting to secure their nation. Courts are functioning, businesses are opening, local representative councils have formed, and the Iraqi people are taking a larger role in the revitalization of their own nation.

The decision to implement a policy of thorough de-Ba'athification in post-war Iraq proved incompatible with reconstruction efforts. This error was compounded by the dismantlement of the military which added to the nation's volatility. Despite the missteps the original goals of de-

Ba'athification are still very much valid. The Ba'ath Party has been dismembered, outlawed, and increasingly de-legitimized in the eyes of the Iraqi people who will not soon allow a resurgence after 35 years of abuse. Recent polls show that 74% of Iraqis agree that "Ba'ath Party leaders who committed crimes in the past should be punished".²⁹ Future legal proceedings will punish the worst offenders and provide justice to victims. However, an effective policy must also avoid a divisive campaign of retribution and vengeance. The humiliating capture of Saddam Hussein represented a significant victory in the effort to destroy his cult of personality. His public demise has contributed to a spirit of optimism now that Iraqis are free from the fear of the tyrant's return to power. This is an environment where Iraq can mobilize her people, recover from the nightmare, and regain her place as a great nation in the Arab world. In every case the coalition must empower Iraqis to make decisions and involve them in the rebuilding of their nation.

Nearly a year after the regime's fall an attitude of pragmatism and reconciliation has sprouted. It's now clear that the coalition can't completely purge the former bureaucracy and still hope to effectively administer the country. Nor will the removal of all Ba'athist from positions of authority make Iraq society whole, safe, or pure.³⁰ Recently the Governing Council announced that they had assumed complete control of the De-Ba'athification process and were focused on reconciliation. This is a positive development that puts Iraqis more in control of their future. "As time goes on, it appears that proper prudence has taken hold."³¹

WORD COUNT= 6000

ENDNOTES

¹ Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of the Ba'athist Iraq, 1969-1989* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1991), 9.

² Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 72.

³ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 211.

⁴ Ibid., 210.

⁵ Alan W. Dowd, "Thirteen Years: The Causes and Consequences of the War in Iraq." *Parameters* 33 (Autumn 2003): 51.

⁶ Baram, 19.

⁷ Makiya, 64.

⁸ Baram. 19.

⁹ Marr, 188.

¹⁰ Marina S. Ottaway, "One Country, Two Plans," *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2003): 56.

¹¹ John Barry and Evan Thomas, "The Unbuilding of Iraq," *Newsweek* (06 October 2003): 34.

¹² Judith S. Yaphe, "Reclaiming Iraq from the Ba'athists." *Current History* (January 2004):12.

¹³ Barry and Thomas, 34.

¹⁴ L. Paul Bremer, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order #1 – De-Bathification of Iraqi Society* (Baghdad: 16 May, 2003): 1.

¹⁵ L. Paul Bremer, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2 – Dissolution of Entities* (Baghdad: 23 May, 2003): 1.

¹⁶ George W. Bush. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C.; the White House, September 2002): 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸ Constantine Fitzgibbon. *De-Nazification*.(London: Joseph Press, 1969) 179; quoted in Douglas Porch, "Germany, Japan, and the de-Ba'athification of Iraq", Available from <<http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/si/mar03/middleEast3.asp>>; Internet. Accessed 14 January 2004.

¹⁹ L. Paul Bremer, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2 – Dissolution of Entities*. 1-2.

²⁰ Conrad Crane and Andrew W. Terrill. *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*. (Carlisle (PA): U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), 2003), 32.

²¹ Barry and Thomas, 34.

²² Ilene R. Prusher, "Jobless Iraqi Soldiers Issue Threats; The US De-Ba'athification Policy Would Not Allow Senior Officers to Join a Reconfigured Military." *Christian Science Monitor* (05 June 2003): 6.

²³ L. Paul Bremer, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order #1 – De-Baathification of Iraqi Society* 16 May 2003):1-2.

²⁴ Susan Sachs, "Purging Ba'ath Party Proves Difficult Task; Saddam's Loyalists Holding On to Power." *International Herald Tribune* (22 November 2003): 5.

²⁵ James Norton, "Engineering a New Iraq," *The Christian Science Monitor* (21 Apr 2003): 08.

²⁶ Allen W. Dulles, "That Was Then; Allen W. Dulles on the Occupation of Germany." *Foreign Affairs* (Nov/Dec 2003): 4.

²⁷ Barry and Thomas, 34.

²⁸ L. Paul Bremer. *Coalition Provisional Authority Order #22 – Creation of a New Iraqi Army* (Baghdad: 07August, 2003). 1-3.

²⁹ Zinsmeister, Karl, "What Iraqis Really Think." (December 2003). Available at <http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.19192/pub_detail.asp>; Internet; Accessed 14 January 2004.

³⁰ Judith S. Yaphe, "Reclaiming Iraq from the Ba'athists." *Current History* (January 2004), 15.

³¹ Susan Sachs, "Purging Ba'ath Party Proves Difficult Task; Saddam's Loyalists Holding On to Power." *International Herald Tribune* (22 November 2003): 5.

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